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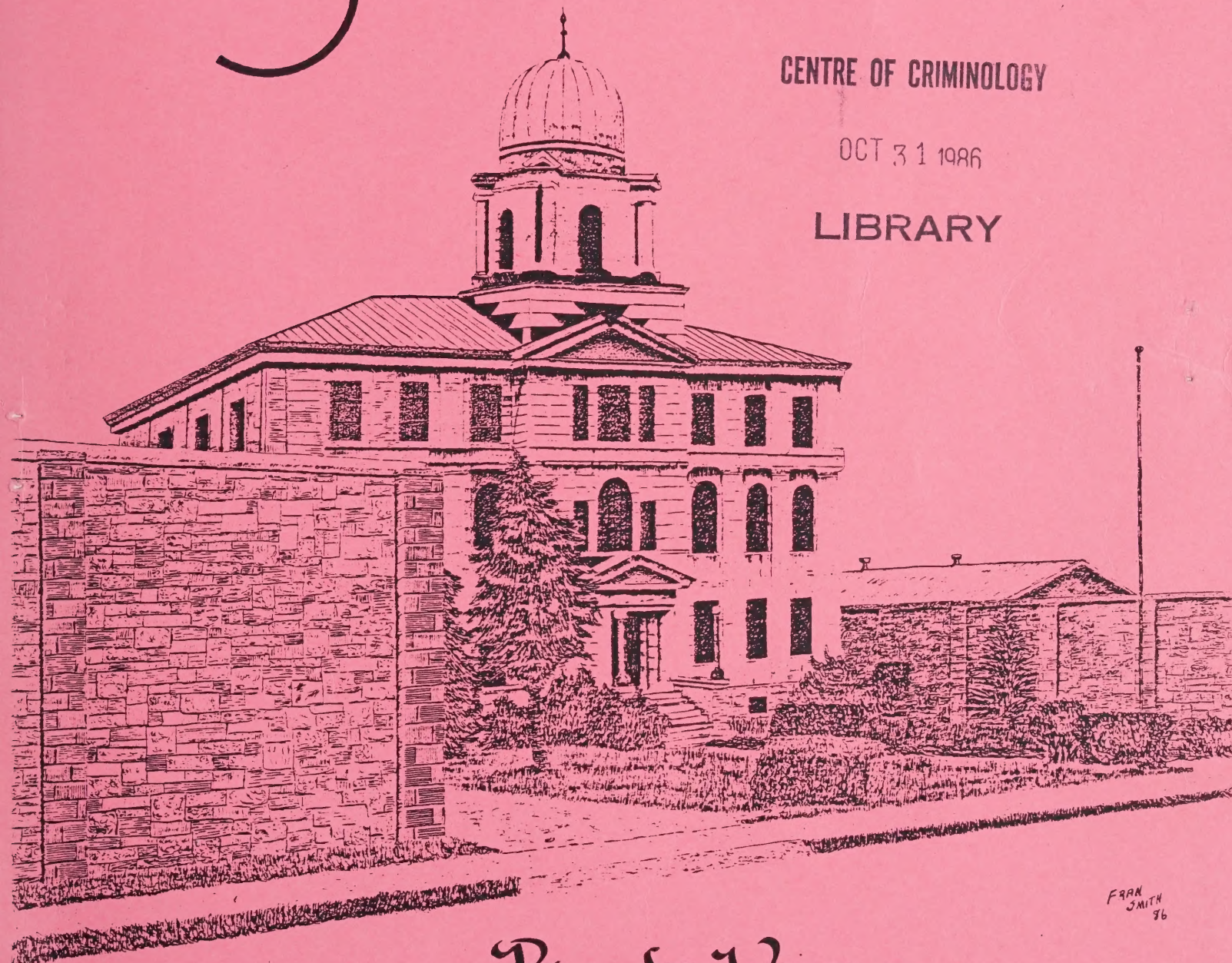
tightwire

VOL. II 1986

CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY

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Prison for Women

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September 1986

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ART POETRY and MUCH MORE

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September, 1986

Dear Reader,

Once again the tides of personal fortune and the winds of suspicion have swept through the office of Tightwire.

Due to the closure of the magazine office for reasons?, there once again arose the double dilemma of a new editor trying to assemble unfamiliar material and to rush an overdue issue to print.

Fortunately the former editorial team left behind a healthy framework to build from. Both Di and Fran have happily packed their pencils, pens and brushes and have rejoined 'Another World'.

We extended a big thank you to them for their efforts and contributions over the past months. We wish them good luck as they move towards future goals.

Tightwire will continue in its on-going effort to provide a forum for the women of P4W to express their views, opinions and sentiments.

The daily, living oppression of this penal system on individuals is agonizing, the courage with which it is born is amazing. We hope Tightwire can reflect these pits and pinnacles of life as well as the more light-hearted moments.

My own appointment to editorship tends to fall into the latter category. I come to this job at Tightwire by way of having served my apprenticeship with the Corps de Cleaners who do brilliant work. Indeed, I feel I'm one of many who have 'polished handles carefully' and risen in position.

Now I'm out of the (broom) closet and I feel both privileged and pleased at having this opportunity to greet you with my first janitorial.

EDITOR

Jo Ann Mayhew



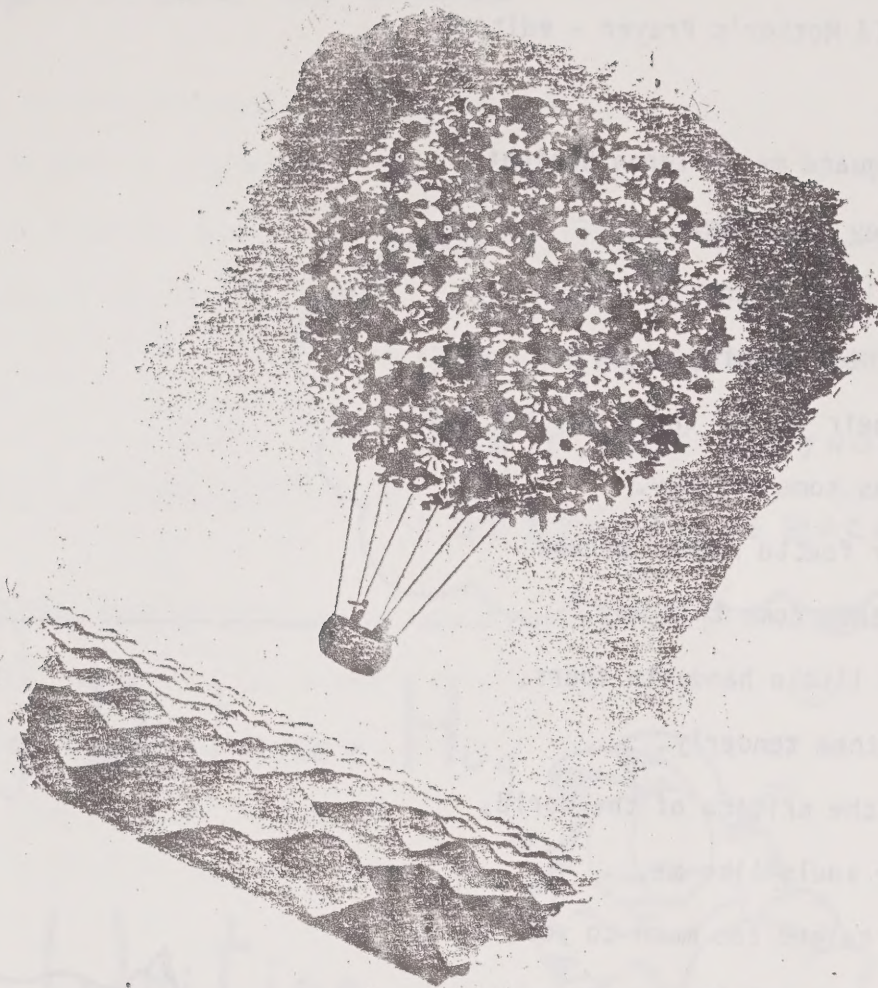
SILENT SCREAMS

The silent screams rebound
All round
These thick wet walls
As if no barrier were there
At all.
Deep and hollow screams
The soul rebounds again
As if from death itself
The journey never ends.

BEFORE (1977 - 1982)

Bonny

Walford



I AM FREE

In the yard I look up into the sky
and I see the birds fly by.
I snuggle my toes in the grass,
I breath deeply of the cool air
and I wish I were free.

Yet the air I breathe is free
and the birds I see are free
and the grass I feel is free.

So I shall take a breath of air
and a blade of grass
and a feather of bird
inside with me
and then shall cry:
"You can call me prisoner, but I am FREE!"

(AFTER (1983 -)

Bonny Walford

Dear Lord, guard my children tonight,

Wherever they might be.

Take their little hands in Yours,

and guide them tenderly.

It's not their fault, their mom's a con,

and unfit as some may say.

Point their feet to higher ground

don't let them come this way.

Take their little hands in Yours,

and guide them tenderly.

Don't let the critics of the world,

scar their souls like me.

I haven't talked too much to you, Lord,

and this might not be the way.

But of all the things, I've learned, in life,

I've never learned to pray.

But tonight I thought that if I try,

you might hear my plea,

and kind of watch my little ones,

their only nine and three.

At these last words the lights went out

and the corridors grew dim.

But from many a dark and lonely cell,

there whispered a soft, AMEN.



IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO
GIVE A HUG WITHOUT
GETTING ONE BACK

A Long Distance Hug

Writing your Child



Children have lots of questions when a parent goes away to prison. It can be a very scary, confusing time for a child. As a parent you can help your children by letting them know that even though you are away from them you still love them and care about them. Letters are one good way to do this. For young children photos and drawings are important.

Many times children have questions which they have no one to ask; or they may ask someone who doesn't have the answers. The questions raised in this handout are the ones we are most frequently asked by kids, and we have given examples of the kinds of answers kids have found helpful. Of course, these are only suggestions about some questions your child may have and some ways to write to children. You will need to plan and think about the best way to help your child while you are away in prison.

Il faut pas que tu te décourages mon ange, maman va revenir tout près de toi
tres bientôt. Si je suis si loin c'est parce que je suis en punition, mais
ne t'inquiète pas personne ne te jugeras. Quand tu viens me voir à la salle
de visite, mon coeur viens gros et j'aimerais pouvoir t'expliquer ce qu'il se
passe mais tu es encore trop petit.

Le temps viendra ou tout va entrer dans l'ordre dans ta p'tite tête.

L'amour que j'ai pour toi et exceptionnelle je me souviens quand tu es né, je
te couchais sur ma poitrine et tu étais à peu près long comme une poupée. Tu
es une partie de moi et je t'adore. Je t'expliquerais aussi la douleur que
j'ai eu dans mon coeur quand ils t'ont séparé de moi. Sans toi mon p'tit
Patrick, je ne pourrais pas être aussi forte que je le suis aujourd'hui.

Sans t'en appercevoir tu me donnes le courage de foncer, tu es ma vie et
personne va nous séparer. Je t'aime mon ange tu v'as voir Maman va te
revenir. Ce n'ai que temporaire. Nous avons toute la vie devant nous et
surtout ne pense jamais que je t'ai abandonné, c'est la justice qui nous a
séparé de force ils ne sont pas humain.

Mais l'amour que j'ai pour toi et se qui est de plus fort au monde. En
attendant mon trésor je suis avec toi tous les jours et toutes les nuits qui
passent. Je t'embrasse tendrement et tu me manques...la souffrance qui me
torture n'est pas celle d'être enfermer mais d'être loin de toi, Patrick je
te le redits: "JE T'AIME et c'est pour toi que je vie. Tu es ma force et
rien au monde est plus fort que mon amour pour toi!

I LOVE YOU BABE,..... Maman SusieXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

"MY SON"

My son so
absorbed in his play
Didn't I rock him
to sleep yesterday
Was it only last night
I stood by his bed
And touched his
small fuzzy head?

Oh Lord, I know so.

Is it possible Lord
someday he'll sigh
Even when he's a
head taller than I
Will love and trust
still be in his face
As he gives me a
grown-up embrace?

Oh Lord, I know so.

His childhood years
I'm able to share
Please help me fill
with loving care
Help me guide him
as both of us grow
May I teach him
his mother to know.

Oh Lord, I know so.

Lord will you keep
him in your care
Help him understand
You and I care
And know we're with him
-- everywhere!

Oh Lord, I know so.

Author Unknown

Child cont'd

1. Why did my mother/father go away?

It is important for your child to understand that you are not away because you want to be away from her, and that she did not do anything to make you leave. For a younger child you might write:

I know it is hard for you to understand why I cannot be home with you. You have not done anything to make me leave. I wish I were at home with you right now, but I can't be. I am away from you because I am in jail.

An older child probably knows something about the court system and would need a more complete explanation. The children who we work with who are older than ten all wanted to know what crime their parent had been convicted of. When they were not told anything, they used their imagination and made up a crime. For a older child you might want to say something like:

The reason I am in jail now is because I was convicted of (robbing a bank), (hurting someone in a fight), (selling drugs), (stealing money), etc.

Understandably, the next question most children have is

2. When is my mother/father coming home?

Of course, this is hard to answer, because even you can't say for sure what your date will be. Again, for children of different ages there are different things they can understand.

For the young child, under six years, it is hard to explain things in terms of time because they don't understand what time means very well. With a young child a week can seem like a very long time. Instead of trying to say when you'll be home you might write something like:

It makes me sad to be away from you, but I think of you every morning when the sun comes up. When you go to bed at night, I am getting ready for bed too.

Child cont'd

An older child, of course, can understand about time and can also understand that you may not know exactly when you'll be home. You could explain:

I don't really know myself when I will be able to come home. My sentence is for _____ but during that time I will be seeing the parole board and they can make changes in the amount of time I have to serve. It is very hard not to be able to tell you when I will be able to come home. I will let you know whenever I know more.

3. Children are also very concerned about exactly what the place looks like where their parent is. Usually children's ideas of jails come from television, and their fantasy about their parent's life is worse than the jail where their parent really is. It is important to let your child know that you are safe. Even if you don't always feel safe, it does not help anyone to have your child worried. Pictures are a good way to describe places to young children. You don't need to be fancy - just a pencil sketch will help a child "see" where his mom or dad is.

You might also want to write something like:

I know you have seen movies and tv about jail so you might be worried about me. I am really doing okay.

At this prison we wear our own clothes, and I often wear the red shirt you like so much.



September, 1986

Munchkin,

The summer holidays are gone for another year and it is back-to-school. The last time I talked to your Dad he said you had done really well in Kindergarten; and, this year you are in Grade 1.

Are you enjoying school? I bet it is fun to be back at school and see your friends again. Are any of your Kindergarten friends in your class?

Eighteen more days until your birthday - 6 years old. You are growing up so fast! Is there anything special you would like me to send you? I will call you on your birthday to wish you a nice day.

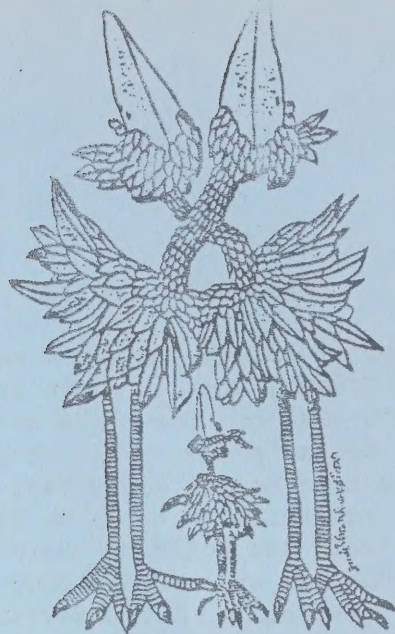
Munchkin, you are very special to Mommy! I love you and miss you! Ask Daddy to give you a big hug and kiss for me.

Love

Mommy

xoxoxoxoxo





You can tell your child about what you do all day, and ask your child how she spends her day. What changes have taken place for your son or daughter since you've been gone?

By now you have written a pretty long letter and given your child a lot of information. Of course, these are questions you're going to have to answer over and over, because in order to really understand the answers children need to ask the same question again and again. Also, you haven't answered all their questions: What about visiting? What about my birthday? What can I tell my friends? etc. But, relax. This is only one letter. You've written your child about of his most important concerns. Next week, write again. Being a parent is a lifelong job that takes time and patience.

4. You can help your child write to you by sending a pre-addressed and stamped envelope.

This handout is part of a Prison Parenting Handout Series that has been prepared by the Prison MATCH/Pleasanton Children's Center inmate and community staff with help from former inmate parents, children, and a professional review panel. This series was developed and prepared with grants from the Haigh Scatena Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, and the Abelard Foundation. The Prison Parenting Handout Series covers four topics: Telling My Child I'm in Prison, Writing to My Child, Celebrations While I'm in Prison, and Planning a Prison Visit With a Child.

For permission to reprint material or to order the entire series contact Prison MATCH, 1515 Webster St., #403, Oakland, CA 94612

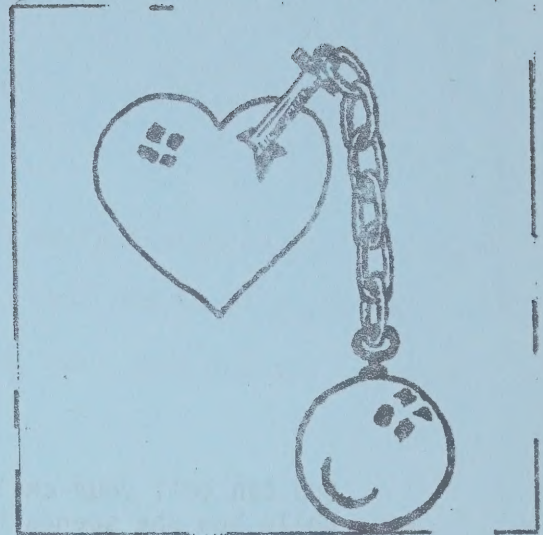
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"THE BROKEN PROMISE"

Don't tell me you don't want me
Cause I know it isn't true
Don't cast off our chain of bondage
Let me prove myself to you
You told me you would wait for me
You built my hopes up high
You said you would be there for me
Now you want to say GOOD-BYE!
If you think I understand
What you're putting me through
Then baby, you've got me all wrong
Cause I'll never love anyone but YOU!

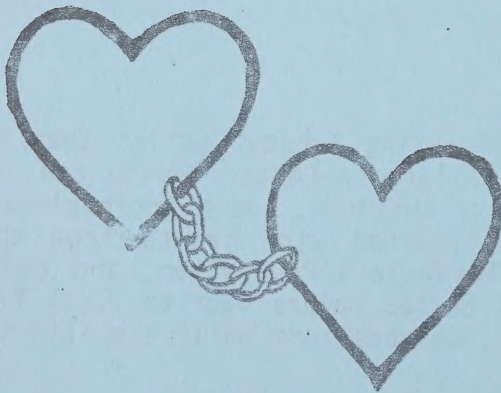
P. Reid



"THOUGHTS"

As I lie here in bed
I think of you
The happy times, the sad times
... Cherished thoughts
Thinking of when you were
tired of me, where I would go
... Wasted thoughts
We held each other, comforted
by each other's voice
... Memorable thoughts
Our bodies touched, there was
ecstasy in the air
... Loving thoughts
We were meant to be together
No one can take our feelings away
... True thoughts!

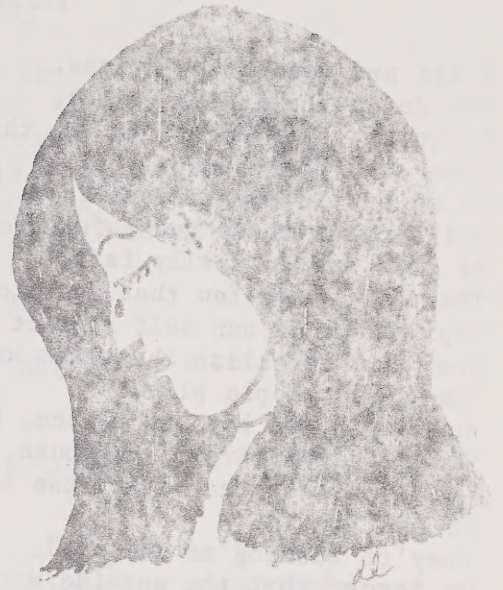
P. Reid



Notice ME:

Put me in your human eye,
Come taste
The bitter tears
I cry.

Hold me in your hand,
Hear me with your ears,
But notice me,
Damn you
Notice me.



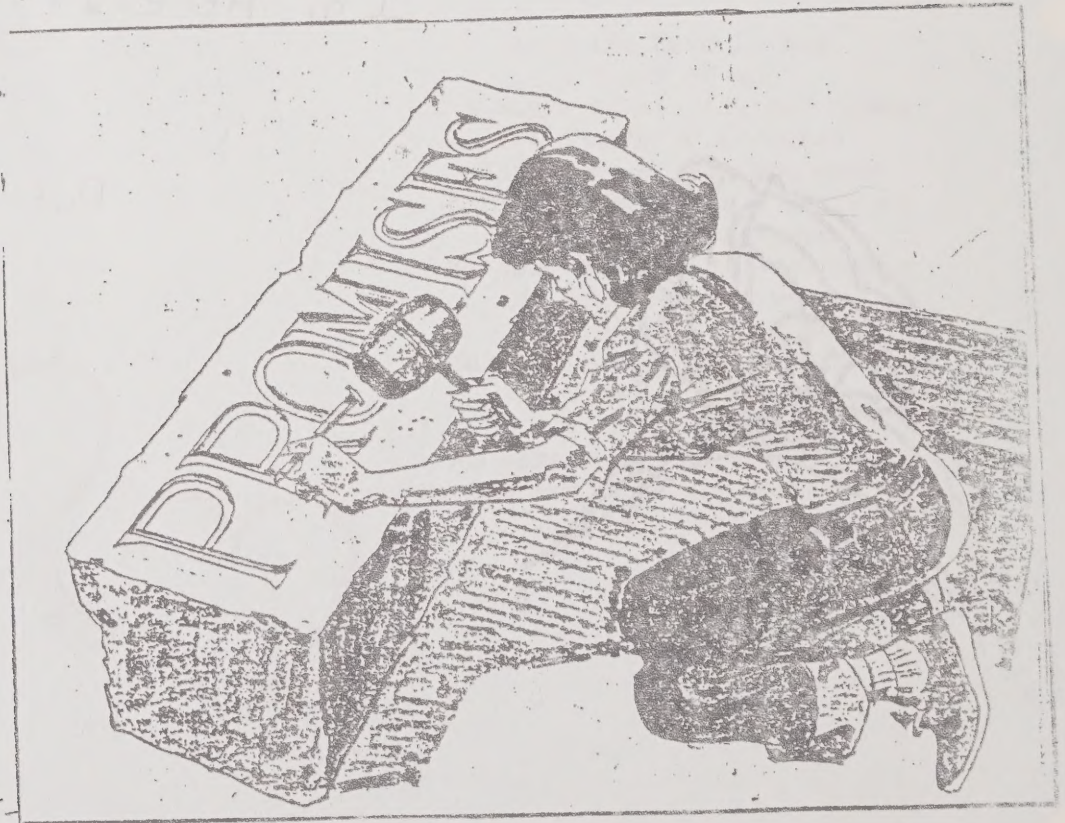
I'm Here....

Author (Unknown)



PRISON

I sit and wonder some times,
Why do we commit our crimes.
Is it the excitement, or the thrill,
Some even spontaneously kill.
So we sit in our tiny cells,
Building up these god awful shells.
Is this system really fair,
There are very few that seem to care.
Deprive us of our self respect and pride,
They don't realize the tears we have cried,
The games people play,
And still, we have no choice, but to stay.
Women they mistreat and abuse,
And it's them that start the burning fuse.
Lo and Behold,
They're turning us ice cold.
We forget what the outside world is like,
But we never give up the fight.
Strung out on dreams and hope,
These are a reality, is how we cope.
So my friend, I hope you can see,
Think, before your next crime, it's not a nice place to be.



Women's Prisons in Britain today

"The majority of convicted women prisoners are convicted of minor crimes against property; less than ten per cent of convicted and imprisoned women have been found guilty of a crime of violence. A disproportionately high number of women in prison are from ethnic minority groups and in general, as a growing body of research indicates, women are primarily sent to prison because of either :-

- a) their unconventional domestic circumstances,
- b) the failure of the non-penal or health institutions to cope with their problems, or
- c) their own refusal to comply with socially-conditioned female gender-stereotype requirements.

If they are young women whom their parents believe to be beyond control, if they are homeless, if they are single or separated from their husbands, if they have drink or drug-related problems or if their children are in care...then they are more likely to go to prison than women leading more conventional lives. Once in a prison they will face disciplinary regimes which are much more rigid than those imposed in the men's prisons and this rigidity is the direct result of both the erroneous assumption that most women in prison are maladjusted, and of the discriminatory social practices which in general demand higher standards of behaviour of women than of men. Analysis of the regimes in the women's prisons leads us to conclude that the motto of those running them could well be summed up by the slogan 'Discipline, Infantilize, Feminize, Medicalize and Domesticize'.

What all women have to face - however they decide to approach their sentence - is a system which engenders in them confused states of consciousness by contradictorily defining them as being both within and without femininity, adulthood and sanity. Women who have never had (and maybe never desired) a house and a family are taught domestic skills. Women who do have children are separated from them and yet are at the same time made to feel guilty about that separation. Women who have already rejected conventional and (for them) debilitating female roles are constantly enjoined to 'be feminine' at the same time they are being denied the sociability with other women prisoners which might in the future enable them to live independently of the male-related domesticity which they have either already rejected, or which on the basis of their experiences, they have come to see as being at least one source of their past difficulties... Furthermore, women

prisoners are made to submit to hundreds of petty rules on the supposition that as women in prisons are generally maladjusted and childlike they need strict discipline and constant surveillance.

Now it could of course be argued that all prisoners, male and female, suffer humiliation through the arbitrary enforcement of innumerable petty rules and we would recognize the justice of that argument. In reply, however, we would argue that male prisoners, being less isolated from each other, are more frequently able to develop a mutually-supportive counter culture which militates against them being so closely supervised as women prisoners.... Men's prisons are so crowded they cannot even begin to attempt to regulate the every movement of the men in the way that officers in the less crowded women's prisons attempt to monitor every move that the women make.

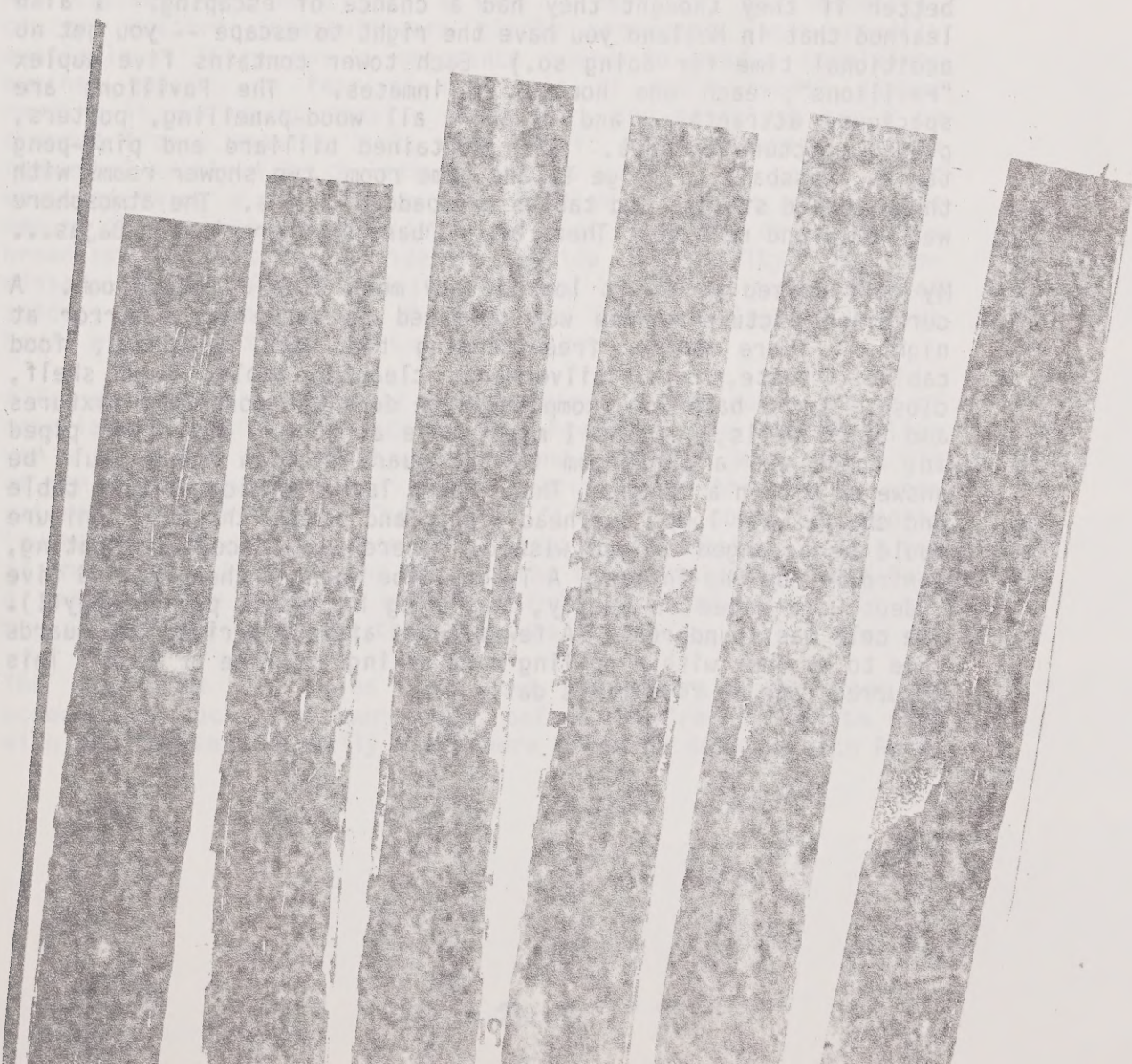
Equally, while the macho ethic held by some male prisoners that some of them at least can view prison brutality as a celebration of machismo, women - even those who have rejected the restraining notion of femininity - have no similar, culturally legitimated and romantic self-concept which might enable them to see brutality as an enhancement of their self-image. That is not to say that women prisoners are never violent. It is to argue they more frequently see brutality for that it is - and fear that they will become brutalized. It is the fear of institutionalization and brutalization, together with the over-rigid discipline, which lead both to the high degree of tension in women's prisons and to the average number of disciplinary charges brought against women prisoners. These are consistently higher than the number brought against men.

Additionally, (and again ironically) women prisoners who have been sent to prison because of their already difficult circumstances are both frustrated at being completely powerless to cope with their problems during their term of imprisonment, and rendered extremely anxious by the often worsening domestic circumstances which their imprisonment brings about. Their very imprisonment can trigger off an onslaught of threats which drive them frantic with worry and fear. There are threats by social workers that they will have the women's children taken into care, threats from husbands that they will divorce them, threats from lovers that they will leave them, threats from housing departments that they will lose their tenancies - and so on. All that the women prisoner can do is ask for drugs to 'calm her nerves', knowing that when she next walks out through the prison gate all her problems will still be waiting for her and that she, having been made fatter by the drugs and generally debilitated by imprisonment, will be even less able to cope with them. And in connection with drug usage in women's prisons, ...the increased risks of institution-generated addictions in teenagers is, of course, yet another reason for responsible people to be appalled at the 77% increase

in the numbers of 15- and 16-year old women being given custodial sentences.

There are few legitimate channels via which prisoners can either report abuses or seek effective help for their problems. Consequently, maybe the greatest damage which prison inflicts is that it induces in prisoners as sense of nothingness, a certain knowledge that they will never be believed and never be taken seriously by the prison authorities. As we know from the already well-documented accounts of prison deaths, such powerlessness can have horrifying and even fatal effects in penal institutions where large numbers of physically ill and mentally- and emotionally-disturbed people are routinely being locked up alone in their prison cells."

Excerpted from Criminal Women, by Pat Carlen, Jenny Higgs, Josie O'Dwyer, Diana Christina & Chris Tchaikovsky. Polity Press (U.K.), 1985.



U.S PRISONER RECALLS DUTCH PRISON TIME

The author of the following article is now an inmate in a New York state prison. He had been held in a Dutch prison, while awaiting extradition back to the USA to stand trial in New York.

On November 15, 1984, I was arrested in Amsterdam, Holland, at the request of a N.Y. county police agency. After four days in a police station cell, I was brought to the Pentientiare Inrichtingen Overamstel, which the local people call the "Bijlmer Bajes" ("bajes" means jail). I spent 3½ months there. I was released, rearrested the following June, and extradited to the U.S. on July 4th, 1985.

The Bajes is, in effect, the Amsterdam County Jail; it is just six short subway stops from the City Center. It is comprised of six white ten-story towers, which are connected by a huge colorfully-painted central room, about half the size of a football field. There is no barbed wire or razor-wire anywhere, no guard towers. The complex is surrounded by a 15-foot cement wall and a canal. (I was told that psychologically, it made their inmates feel better if they thought they had a chance of escaping. I also learned that in Holland you have the right to escape -- you get no additional time for doing so.) Each tower contains five duplex "Pavilions"; each one houses 24 inmates. The Pavilions are spacious, attractive, and clean; all wood-panelling, posters, plants, picture windows. Each contained billiard and ping-pong tables, fussball, a large TV and game room, two shower rooms with three locked stalls, and tables and padded chairs. The atmosphere was homey and relaxed. There are no bars anywhere in the Bajas...

My cell amazed me -- it looked very much like a motel room. A curtained picture window was surfaced to serve as a mirror at night. There was a free-standing bed with bedspread, food cabinet, plate, cups, silverware, cleaning tools, long shelf, closet, and a bathroom, complete with door and porcelain fixtures and tiled walls, such as I might have at home. Music was piped in; there was an intercom to the guard station which would be answered within a minute. There was a large formica writing table and chair, wall lamp, overhead light, and padded chair. Furniture could be arranged as you wished. There was forced-air heating, controlled by the inmate. A TV could be reanted cheaply, and five videos were piped in weekly, including hard-core pornography(!). The cell was soundproof. A few minutes after I arrived two guards came to my door with a rolling cart asking, "Coffee or tea?" This occurred four or five times daily..

The Bajes houses 720 inmates, many of them non-Dutch; it's quite an international mix. Most of the guards speak English. A relaxed, friendly atmosphere is encouraged; I never saw any friction between inmates. In Holland, prison sentences are short; three or four years is considered a long sentence. I think such short sentences greatly reduced tension "inside".

The Dutch feel that the word "gezellig" (which roughly translates as "cozy") best describes the national character; certain aspects of life are considered "gewoon" (normal). These are provided in the Bajes. Privacy was considered a right, as was quiet. All inmates are treated with respect (the guards never knew your charges -- and they would have respected you anyway). Inmates were left their dignity and individuality (we wore our own clothing -- in fact, by the time I left, almost all of my possessions were in my cell).

The program was quite complete. Sports five times/week, fresh air everyday, work three or four hours/day, rec daily and twice on weekends. The library was part of the city system; books could be requested. Once a week, law students came to advise us. Once a week the clergy conducted a talk group (coffee and cake served). Art classes were held once a week. Dentists, psychologists, clergy, doctors (tranquilizers gladly provided), were readily available. There was a grievance board to handle complaints against guards; no fear of reprisals (I don't recall anyone needing it during my stay). Newspapers and magazines could be ordered from a massive list, also ethnic food packages. At my request I received Dutch lessons twice a week, in my cell. I got massaged twice a week for a neck problem. There was a huge amount of the best art supplies available. A prison radio station broadcast requests from inside and outside the facility. The commissary was remarkable well-stocked, and included a huge array of spices, and fresh fruit. While at the Bajes I slept only five hours a night -- there was too much to do.

A few weeks before Christmas we were given a tremendous amount of materials with which to decorate the Pavilion; the best Pavilion won a prize. A tree was brought in and trimmed. We pooled a bit of money and organized four shared feasts; twice these meals were catered from outside. There were films, two concerts, sports tournaments, a week off from work, special broadcasts. During one of the feasts, I sat at the head of the table wishing I could take a photo -- the uniforms of the guards (who joined us for the meals) were the only clue that this was prison....

The guards at the Bajes must work downstairs, monitoring TV screens and such, for four years, before they're allowed to work with the inmates. Usually there were three on duty in each Pavi-

lion, while I was there, there were only two; they were quite unhappy that there was no longer much time to socialize with us. They were always polite, patient, and considerate. They carried no weapons -- physical force was always an absolute last resort; I never saw it used. They were highly trained and quite conscientious, compassionate, and dedicated. When they had the time, they joined us for rec; for most of us, there was no feeling of "them" or "us".

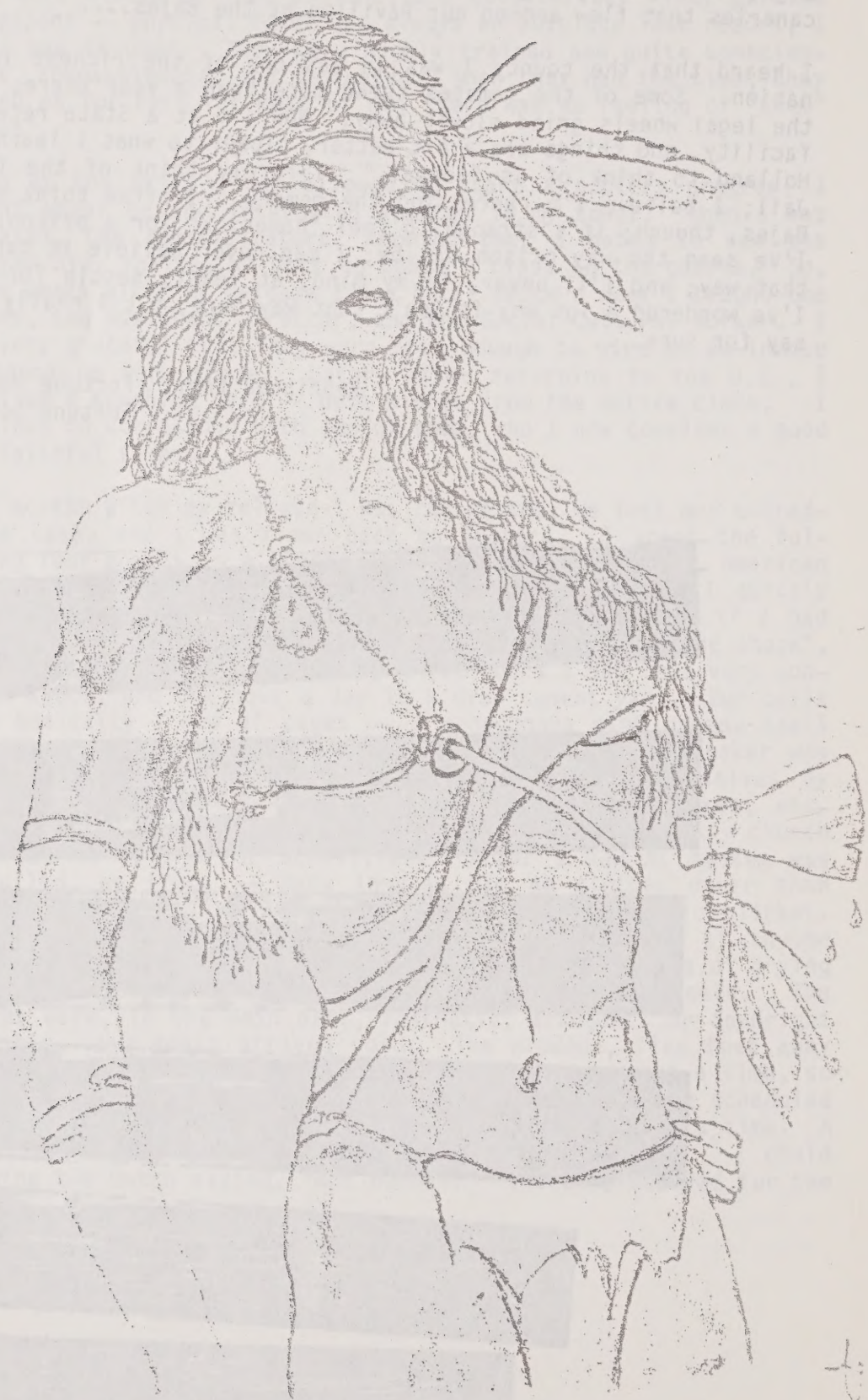
While at the Bajes I was allowed to start a pottery program; I taught wheel to any interested inmates in my tower. When I was released, the administrators, knowing that I hated to see the program die, invited me back to teach a class to the guards. So, a few weeks after my release I was back; twice a week I taught the guards, the Assistant Director, and the Social Cultural Worker. I was very grateful that they were open enough to give an ex-inmate a chance to work there. Later, after returning to the U.S., I received a touching card -- best wishes from the entire class. I continue to correspond with one of them, who I now consider a good and faithful friend....

Four months after my release I was rearrested; we lost our extradition case, and I was flown back to America. I spent the following four months in a County Jail near New York City. American prisons have a terrible reputation in Holland -- and I quickly discovered why. I realized full well at the Bajes that, if I had to return to the States I would experience severe "culture shock", and it was true. I spent twenty-three hours a day in a very confined space, and one hour a day in a drab cement yard. Our cells were basically a row of cages -- a monotonous mint green, small and bare, cold, damp, and incredibly noisy. (A loudspeaker was aimed into my cell; the guards sometimes amused themselves by blasting radio music, feedback, desk noises, inane jokes, etc. through it.) We did have a TV set, but aside from a weekly church service, no program or activities. After a new AC system was installed, we froze -- many inmates had no clothes other than their uniform, and we were only allowed one threadbare blanket. We showered in a horrible cement room, in full view of anyone approaching the tier. We were provided no "legal" means of drying out wash; clotheslines were jerry-rigged from torn sheets. The guards were, in the main part, apathetic, arrogant, or downright sadistic. Our meals arrived cold. The windows, five feet away through a set of bars, were often closed for weeks at a time, so we could never glimpse the outside world. We were often scheduled for yard at night, and wouldn't see the sun for days at a time. A huge bank of fluorescent lights glared into the cells. I could imagine the Dutch saying, "Not normal." I became starved for the

sight of anything organic. I wistfully remembered the two pet canaries that flew around our Pavilion at the Bajes....

I heard that the county I was in was one of the richest in the nation. Some of the inmates spend more than a year there, while the legal wheels grind slowly away. Now I'm at a State reception facility, and things are a bit better, closer to what I learned in Holland to think of as "normal." I rarely think of the County Jail; I believe I'm repressing the memory. I often think of the Bajes, though; it's strange to feel "homesick" for a prison. But I've seen the way prison can be; I can never believe it can't be that way; and I'll never, in my mind, at least, settle for less. I've wondered a lot why it isn't that way here, but I really can't say for sure....

Reprinted from: Fortune News
Fortune Society



POW-WOW

Toronto Star September 3, 1986

Indian festival glory renews pride in past

WABIGOON RESERVE — "Without Indians there will be no North America."

That view by Calvin Pompana, of Sioux Valley, Man., was shared by more than 400 Indians who gathered here on the Labor Day weekend for 48 hours of song, prayer and festivities to celebrate their cultural and spiritual pride.

Decked out in full traditional regalia of leggings, bone choker, eagle-feather bustle and a delicate porcupine and deer hair headdress called a *roach*, Pompana stood as an example of how proud and regal Indians once were.

Gathered for the third annual pow-wow at the Wabigoon Band reservation, 200 kilometres northwest of Thunder Bay, adults and children alike heeded the words of their leaders for a return to tradition.

The Wabigoon Band is unique as the only one headed by a woman — Chief Esther Pitchenese — and an all-female council.

This pow-wow centred around 15 drums and singing groups from different reservations, headed by George Brown's drum from the host band.

"The songs give us strength — they are for the living and the people who have gone home," said Pompana. "As we dance, we gather momentum, strength and spiritual power."

The backlash against drug and alcohol abuse is so strong, many reservations are banning alcohol and a reservation hosting a pow-wow must be dry.

"Like everyone else, I used to blame the white man for our problems," said Harold Good Sky, 46, of the Bois Fort Indian Reservation, Red Lake, Minn. "The white man didn't do it to us — we fell prey to our own systematic decay of a way of life."

Good Sky returned to reservation life after many years in the "white man's world," where he had a failed marriage to a white woman, taught Indian culture at a university and worked as a probation officer in Minneapolis.

"We've got to teach our children the traditional values," he said. "When I taught language, 85% of the class were Ojibway — and they didn't have a clue about their heritage."

Good Sky blames his people for losing track of their own heritage.

"If I spoke English to my great-grandmother and grandmother I got whacked across the head," Good Sky said.

But language and rituals were the order of the day at the pow-wow.

Story and photos by Stuart McCarthy

For 12 hours each day, traditional, jingle-dress, fancy-shawl and grass dancers, some as young as two years old, pounded a beat in time to the drums.

The pow-wow was also a forum for such joyous occasions as two marriage announcements, a baby's first birthday and a woman receiving her Indian name.

As one guest put it, "Wouldn't it be great if there was one central place where we could have one long pow-wow for the entire summer?"

Someday, his dream might come true.

...
This is dedicated to the memory of Margaret Gardner, a spiritual elder of the Wabigoon Band, who died the morning of the second day of the pow-wow. May her spirit continue to guide the Wabigoon.



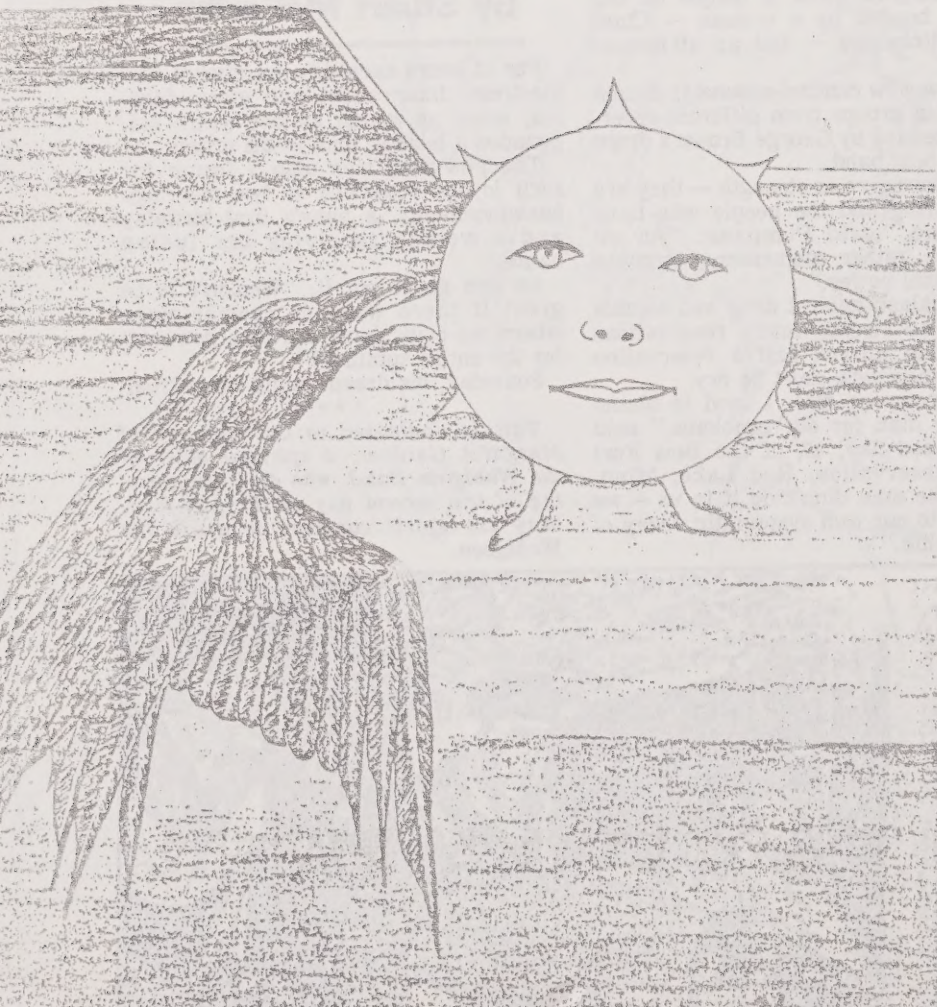
AUGUST 20, 1986

I must learn to find peace within my own lodge. Following my own path. For as much as I care for another human being I cannot walk their path. We each must complete our own holy circle. Being the unique individual that we were created to be.

I cannot tell you how to walk your path and I cannot walk it for you. For then you would be dead as an individual.

Even though two people are together they still must walk separate paths being true to their circle. Finding our own answers is through our individual experiences. Perception is unique to each of God's children in that we all see only through our own eyes. I can love you, comfort you and laugh with you. But you are you and I am I. Separate though together. By realizing and understanding our separateness we can join our strengths and respect and honour each other together. Be proud to be yourself.

Jordan



Warrior Relatives

Understanding courage and love
Companions with destiny
Bringing good light
Helping find a way
Freedom a relationship
You have shown us

Warrior Relatives

The times we remember the people
The flowers bloom for us
The times we are human joy
The resistance grows from us....

John Trudell

On October 19th, Dino and Gary Butler, on trial in Portland, Oregon, were found innocent of all charges and released from prison.



ENTRE LES MURS
DE
L'AUTRE MONDE

Le soir avant de m'endormir,
je lance un tendre soupir,
toute en me disant:
"Tiens Bon, il faut survivre".

Je suis l'a coucher sur le dos,
en écoutant le cri de douleur,
qui fait palpiter mon coeur.
J'aimerais tant éloigner cette peur!

Mais hélas; il faut payer,
payer le prix que l'homme a décider,
cet homme s'appelle: M. le Juge,
et il se croit le roi des ruses...

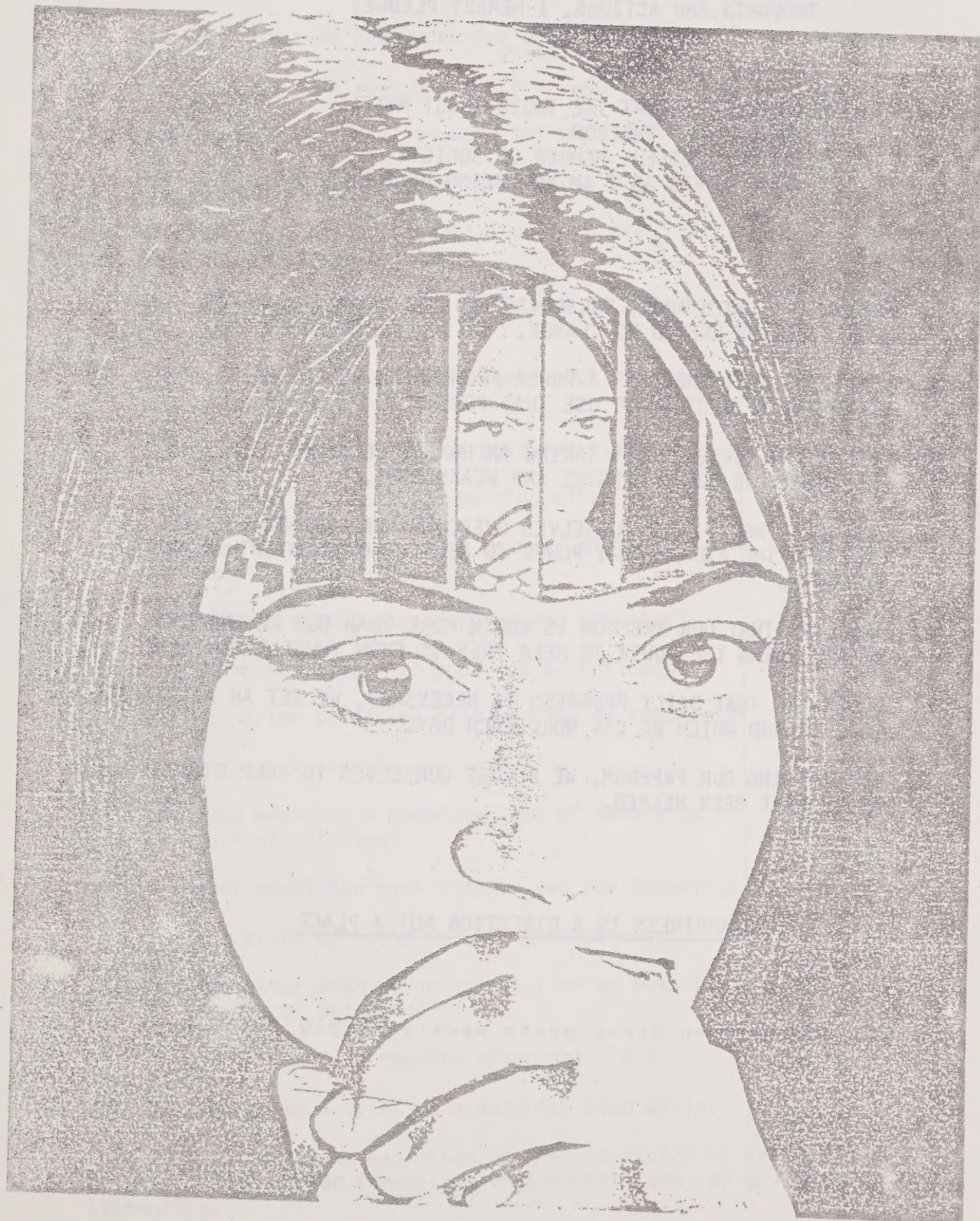
Ni pitié, ni vérité,
me voilà sans liberté.

Cet homme qui a été acheter,
m'envoie dans un monde perpétuite,
en sachant d'avance que je deviendrais
une jeune fille triste et révolter.

Bon voici ce que nous attendions,
il me sentence, à une vie en prison,
sans vraiment savoir la vraie raison....

Susie Hunt
July, 86

45 Artist: Marta Thoma
Client: St. Martin's Press
Media: Watercolors



THE SEVEN STEPS TO FREEDOM

KNOWING THAT MY FREEDOM DEPENDS ON MY
THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS, I HEREBY PLEDGE:

TO FACE AND ACCEPT THE TRUTH ABOUT MYSELF
TO MAINTAIN MY FREEDOM
TO BECOME A USEFUL MEMBER OF SOCIETY
TO HELP OTHERS AS I AM NOW BEING HELPED

1. FACING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES AND THE WORLD AROUND US,
WE DECIDED WE NEEDED TO CHANGE.
2. REALIZING THAT THERE IS A POWER FROM WHICH WE CAN GAIN
STRENGTH, WE DECIDED TO USE THAT POWER.
3. EVALUATING OURSELVES BY TAKING AN HONEST SELF-APPRAISAL, WE
EXAMINED BOTH OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.
4. ENDEAVOURING TO HELP OURSELVES OVERCOME OUR WEAKNESSES, WE
ENLISTED THE AID OF THAT POWER TO HELP US CONCENTRATE ON OUR
STRENGTH.
5. DECIDING THAT OUR FREEDOM IS WORTH MORE THAN OUR RESENTMENTS,
WE ARE USING THE POWER TO HELP FREE US FROM THOSE RESENTMENTS.
6. OBSERVING THAT DAILY PROGRESS IS NECESSARY, WE SET AN ATTAINABLE
GOAL TOWARD WHICH WE CAN WORK EACH DAY.
7. MAINTAINING OUR FREEDOM, WE PLEDGE OURSELVES TO HELP OTHERS
AS WE HAVE BEEN HELPED.

HAPPINESS IS A DIRECTION NOT A PLACE

(A Seven Step Group meets weekly at P4W. -editor)

TEST YOURSELF!!

20 QUESTIONS THAT MAY KEEP YOU ALIVE!

	YES	NO
1. Did you lose time from work due to drinking?		
2. Did drinking make your home life unhappy?		
3. Did you drink because you were shy with people?		
4. Has drinking affected your reputation?		
5. Have you gotten into financial difficulties because of your drinking?		
6. Did you turn to lower companions and an inferior environment when drinking?		
7. Did your drinking make you careless of your family's welfare?		
8. Has your drinking decreased your ambition?		
9. Did you want a drink "the morning after"?		
10. Did your drinking cause you to have difficulty sleeping?		
11. Has your efficiency decreased since drinking?		
12. Did drinking jeopardize your job or business?		
13. Did you drink to escape from worries or troubles?		
14. Did you drink alone?		
15. Have you ever had a complete loss of memory as a result of drinking?		
16. Has your physician ever treated you for drinking?		
17. Did you drink to build up self-confidence?		
18. Have you ever been in an institution or hospital on account of drinking?		
19. Have you ever felt remorse after drinking?		
20. Did you crave a drink at a definite time daily?		

This list of questions has often been found useful in helping drinkers find out for themselves whether they are, or may become, alcoholics.

If you answer "yes" to three or more questions, you may be an alcoholic. But remember, you are the only person in the world who can make that statement realistically about yourself.

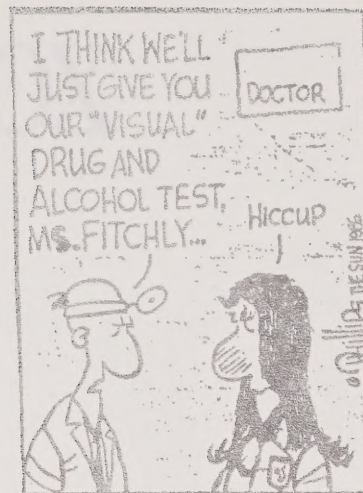
TO FUTURE TRAVELLERS OF THE CRYSTAL SHIP

In the spoon the ingredients you'll crush,
Draw into a fit and hit for the rush.
You'll sit fairly still for a very short time,
While to your head the drug will climb.
You fold up your little clear plastic sack,
From where it came, you put it back.
Six hits and your day is not at its peak,
You're no longer human; you're a speed freak.
Now your life will start a new course,
As you go on you'll gradually get worse.
First lost in self-respect and pride,
You won't realize the tears your loved ones have cried.
Friends and trusts you'll never retrieve,
You can do nothing now but con and deceive.
You think of this curse will I ever be free,
Then it happens, you seek help or you gratefully O.D.

Anonymous



WRESTLING WITH
31. THE MONKEY



WHY A.A. IN PRISON?

A.A. members in institutions around the world have been asked many times, "Why do you need to attend A.A. meetings in prison? How does it help you? There is little if any, alcohol available; thus enforced sobriety exists, so why bother?"

A national survey of the penal institutions across the country revealed that 85% of the inmates had a drinking problem, which either directly or indirectly was responsible for their having committed a criminal offense. True, the prison environment doesn't permit easy access to booze, but it does contain alcoholics. If he can lick his drinking problem, then his future probably won't be threatened again by confinement. As we all know, alcoholism is an illness and must be treated as such. If an individual contracts a disease or illness, do we remove him from the contagious environment and then forget about his condition? No! We also treat him for that which he has already contracted. Simply removing a man from a burning building after he has been severely burned by the flames is of little help unless we also treat him for his injuries.

Today is the first day of the rest of our lives and A.A. teaches the twenty-four hours-at-a-time way of life. By attending A.A. we are using today, which is all the time any of us has, and are learning how to face our problems, learning how to overcome those character defects by which we are so possessed. For many of us, this is the first time we have had the opportunity to hear of and about the A.A. program.. Rather than serve time, we desire time to serve us. We have much to learn and many things are required of us in our preparation for a successful, sober life. We must first come to know ourselves; possess a willingness to change for the better; learn to be humble; be tolerant of others, allowing them the right to be different from us even if we think they are wrong; learning to give rather than take. We must learn to laugh at appropriate times instead of taking ourselves too seriously and practice the A.A. principles in all our affairs. Why A.A. in Prison? So that we can learn to live as normal human beings and to know that God as we understand Him is in here also.

By John C.

Editor's Note: The Prison for Women A.A. Serenity Group meets every Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. Check with S.C.D.O. for location and listen for announcement.

82
Loving You!

Loving you!
Is it so wrong?
Can you not believe;
That someone can LOVE YOU,
For being just you?

Loving you!
It hurts so much,
Because you can turn your back,
So easily.
Is it so easy,
Not to feel LOVE?
Is it so hard?

Loving you!
Is so hard,
Because knowing,
You will just get up and leave;
But just remember,
I do LOVE you,
With all my heart!

Loving you!
I will always be there,
For you and you alone!

Debbie Gegwetch



THE TERRY FOX

RUN

WALK

JOG

BIKE

WHEEL

RIDE

Bring a Friend!

YARD

at P4W

LOCATION

Raised

\$

444.

Thanks to -

and

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F. Chaisson

B.J. Harry

K. Borden

S. Bouchard

S. Russell

D. Deauvereau

G. Goring

D. Carpenter

J. Mayhew

R. Roffman

A. Skirving

M. Njeim

N. Vestering

S. Paquachon



Celebrity Visit

The solicitor General's visit was brief but informative. He was accompanied by two assistants who didn't show very much concern except when provincial transfers came up as a topic. Mr. Kelleher was attentive but highly inexperienced. He has worked as a lawyer and a prosecutor so he says he knows both sides of the fence. We all know, as prisoner's, this is highly unlikely. No one knows what it's like to be put behind bars except the individuals themselves. I'm sure it's better to have a little of both laws under his belt for in his position of decision making, maybe it will provide a fresh outlook on the Correctional services. Lord knows we could do with a fresh outlook as the one's who have served before are biased and not completely by choice. It's something that just happens with time. All in all, we didn't spend all that much time together so all I can say is good luck Mr. Kelleher you'll need it.

K. Eldridge

I.C.C.P.
Kim Eldridge

A MINUTE WITH ANDY ROONEY

The following narrative is from the February 29, 1986, edition of 60 minutes, taped at Kent Institution.

"About a month ago I was asked if I'd like to accompany a group of our CBS staff on a tour of a modern-day Canadian penitentiary.

Now it's not every day you get an invitation like that and I'd like to say at the start I've never been in prison before -- not a real one anyway. I mean, my office is small and cramped and although it has no windows to speak of, I've always thought of it as being kind of cozy and not at all what one might imagine as being a dungeon, if you know what I mean. It's more a second home for me than a prison.

OK, so I accepted, and our executive producer, Merl Hunch, along with John tapeit and our 18-member production crew and a ton-and-a-half of equipment were all loaded onto a Canadian Air Force jet as guests of that country's Prime Minister and Canadian taxpayers. Nice people, Canadians.

.....That's my wife and two daughters you see here in the background of this shot on board the jet. I thought it was nice of our hosts to allow us to bring our families along for the journey, too.

Here we are arriving at the International Airport in Vancouver, British Columbia. As you can see from these shots, there was no igloos to be seen; a bit of a disappointment I might add. I always though there was lots of ice and snow in Canada. But on this particular trip, there wasn't so much as a smattering to be seen. Oh well.

The bus ride from the airport to the prison took about two hours, and as you can see from these shots of our arrival, it was nice of the warden to put garden elves and pink flamingos on the front lawn of the institution. I thought they helped to distract from the harshness of all the barabed wire and gun towers.

And speaking of wardens, I always thought there was only one to a prison. Not so in Canada. In fact, we were introduced to four that day, all of which worked in the same prison. No doubt that's got something to do with their government's attempts to eas the high unemployment rate in that country.

Once inside, we were given a tour of the facilities. And from these pictures, you might imagine that we weren't really in a penitentiary, but either a shopping centre or the inner courtyard of a buddhist monestary. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Oh, here's a prisoner...



'Excuse me sir...sir...

Well, I guess that one got away. Camera shy, no doubt.

Here comes another, Let's try him.

Excuse me sir...yes you. I see you're picking up paper. Are you a prisoner here?'

'The big D.--Doctor Deeento at your service.'

'You're a doctor?'

'No, just a prisoner.'

'Oh, I see. Well, tell me Doc--may I call you Doc?--what type of crime was it that delivered you into the Canadian penitentiary system?'

'I boosted a mickey of Scotch.'

'I beg your pardon?'

'What are you deaf or something? I said I stole a bottle of J&B whiskey from a liquor store. That is, I "attempted" to steal it shortly after my release a couple of months ago. As you can see, I didn't succeed. It gets pretty cold on the streets around here in November you know.'

'Oh, you were on parole then?'

'No. Mandatory supervision. Just got out. I'd put in about four and a half years, and when I was released last fall, they gave me sixty dollars. I'd managed to save during that time. And even though they threw in a fifteen dollar bonus, well, it doesn't go as far nowadays as it used to.'

'So tell me Doc, when are they going to let you out again, and how much does it cost to keep you here?'

'Well, er...it currently costs about forty-thousand bucks a year to house each guy in the pen. and with my new release date slated for next July--that's eight months away--I guess the taxpayers will be getting off lucky with only a thirty-thousand dollar price tag this time round.'

'I notice you're picking up paper. Is that your job here?'

'Yeah, it's my training for gainful employment so that when they let me out next time, I won't have to come back for doing something foolish, like not being able to find a job.'



'I see, I see...

Well, it's been a pleasure talking to you Doc. Good luck in the future.'

'Thanks, I'll need it.'

We heard a lot of stories like that. Such fanciful imaginations those prisoners have. Can you imagine what the system would be like if people were really put in jail for such trivialities? Believe it or not, some prisoners we spoke to even claimed they didn't know if or when they'd ever get out.

What nonsense.

We saw a lot of people doing work assignments at the prison. There were people sweeping sidewalks, scrubbing floors and washing windows, people doing laundry and cutting the grass, cleaning shower stalls and polishing ashtrays and turnstiles. I wonder what it's like to do something like that for years at a time. Mind you, the prisoners seemed busier than most of the guards we saw.

And I learned something new at that penitentiary. I learned that there are a lot of females employed as prison guards in Canada.

In this picture, you'll notice that it's a woman up there on that catwalk with an M-16 rifle and the pistol on her hip. I thought it kind of strange for a woman to be doing something like that. I mean, look at her; she looks like she's the one in a cage.

Later when I asked her what it's like to be a security guard in a men's prison, she told me that it really isn't as bad as some people might think, but that the work is extremely boring. She added however, the \$15.40 an hour (plus double-time overtime), does seem to make up for the monotony of her routine.

Convicts in Canada presently earn about \$3-4 a day to buy tobacco and such. And after talking with the guard, I came to realize why one hour of her time is worth about the same as the total daily pay of any four prisoners combined: it's because the penitentiary officials want to provide their prisoners with examples of what meaningful employment is all about.

Then again, the woman also mentioned that since her mother had been an army drill-sergeant -- they call them 'quartermasters' up here -- and her father was a twenty-year veteran of the Canadian Penitentiary Service, it seemed to her to be the only natural place where she might have an opportunity to gain advancement in her future years. They got a pension plan also.



And yes, I suppose I felt a little sorry for her, too. There aren't many eligible bachelors who would seriously consider settling down with a young woman who, at age nineteen, weighs 190 pounds, wears army boots, plays with weapoos all day, and drives a half-track to work in the mornings. But then, that's another story.

I could go on and on about other things I learned that day -- like why convicts detest being called 'inmates', and why the turnkeys resent being called 'screws', but I'm afraid I'm out of time.

As it was, the day passed quicker than we expected and so we didn't have nearly enough opportunity to see all the things we had intended. It was a shame we couldn't stay longer, but maybe we'll get invited back again soon.

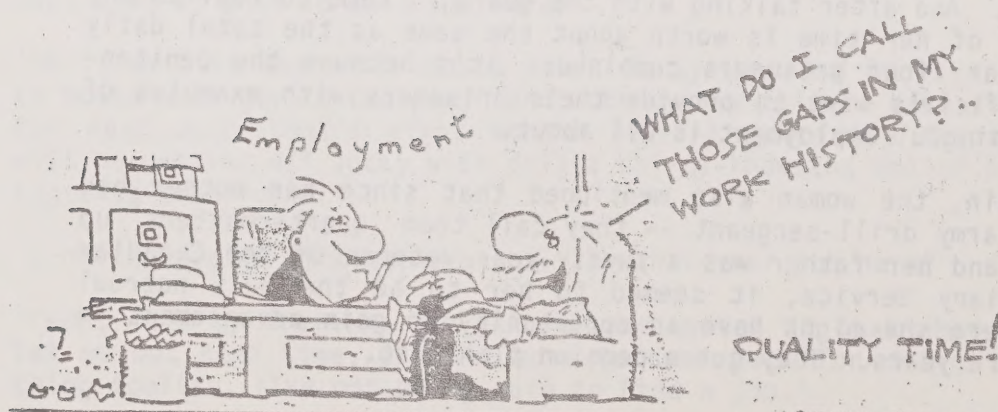
But before we left, I personally thanked all the various wardens for their undivided attention -- they followed us everywhere -- and the invaluable insight they offered us about the Canadian corrections industry. Can you imagine that, they call it an industry?

Oh yes, and by the way -- I'd especially like to thank the Prime Minister's wife, who personally arranged for our group's twin floor accomodation at the Hotel Vancouver, and the wonderful champagne brunch for our film crew and entourage while taking the ten hour flight from New York to Vancouver.

The Chateau Lafite '68 was excellent, as waht the maple leaf salad and the stuffed beaver-tail entree. Thank you, Melissa. It's good to see a country that knows how to impress its visitors by exhibiting such a high degree of cultural aesthetics.

I'm Andy Rooney for 60 Minutes. Good night."

Submitted by Greg Waters. KENT TIMES



AN INMATE

People ask, what is an inmate or a convict?
Whatever the case may be,
They fail to realize, that he or she is a person,
Or they're just too blind to see.

Inmates are people,
People who love & share,
Inmates are people,
People who love & care.

Inmates are people,
Just like you & I,
They are born, they live & they die,
Believe it or not they have feelings,
They know how to cry,
Because they've lost a loved one,
Or a wife or sweetheart has said good bye.

I know you can say,
They've stolen or cheated & lied,
But I think everyone of us,
Has something to hide.

I know there are people,
Who'll help this type of man,
And all I can say is thank you,
Because you seem to understand.

Inmates are people,
People with hopes & dreams,
Don't believe everyone in jail,
Is vicious & mean.

Yes an inmate is a person,
A person whose made mistakes,
But don't look down your nose,
Please give the man a break.

Now you may ask yourself,
Why I wrote this poem,
It's because I was a convict,
And prison was my home.

Now I can only hope,
That you'll accept me as a man,
And that this poem,
Will give you a better understanding,
Of an inmate, of a man

THE POEM " The Cross In My Pocket"
Will send free upon request
write

Brother Tony Roberts
44 Lumsden Cres.,
Cambridge, Ontario
Canada N1R 5N3

'TURNING TO STONE'

ANOTHER (LAST?) RESPONSE TO THE FILM

When I heard that a film had been made about women in the Prison for Women, I was interested. My interest turned to surprise and apprehension, however as with the pre-publicity came warnings of extreme violence and rape. Hearing this, I questioned the very focus of this film before even seeing it.

As I watched it, I was sickened and angry, not at what was supposedly going on in the prison (I speak regularly with the women currently in the prison every week), but at how the director of this film could have the audacity, the insensitivity and the lack of scruples to sensationalize so-called events at the prison to the extreme that he did. What was the point of 'Turning to Stone'? Was it Canada's version of 'Scared Straight' to make young women afraid of lesbians and afraid to break the law, for fear of being sent to Prison for Women? Was it to convince the public that the women in the Prison for Women are a bunch of violent hoodlums never to be trusted? Was it to prove some fantasy of the director that women are rapists - that women's prisons are no different from mens? Was it a "historical piece" or does Mr. Kastner assume that this degree of violence is still going on? In his recent letter of response to the inmate committee, he makes himself clear in brushing aside the comments of the chairperson of the inmate committee that women now inside feel, once again, "kicked in the teeth". He arrogantly calls her opinions "pure bunkum", accuses her of not knowing what went on a few years ago, and assumes himself that violence is continuing, by quoting a high percentage of women in the prison, in for crimes of violence. He dismisses concerns of women in the Prison for Women over their families' reactions to the film, scoffing that families would not be "so naive" as to think that life in the prison could be any less terrifying than what he has portrayed. What is the responsibility of media, here, when a number of parents have been extremely upset, when it has been used by vindictive husbands to turn children against their incarcerated mothers, and when the film has already been used on many occasions to turn the public against women with criminal records?

What disturbed me the most about 'Turning to Stone' was the depiction of hollywoodized, sensationalized, exaggerated, violence leaving one with the impression that beatings and forced rape are an almost daily occurrence and certainly a daily threat. As a dramatization, Mr. Kastner was able to crowd as many violent scenes into the movie as he could, choosing this message over any true understanding of what is taking place, and why. When he mentions women who are in for violent crimes, why does he not mention those who have been raped since childhood, who fought when they were strong enough to defend themselves, or who had never

been given the support to figure out the origin of their anger. Current estimates are that 80% of women in the Prison for Women tell their stories, rather than interpreting to his own satisfaction some interviews he conducted a few years ago. Many of the women remember him coming to interview and many refused to be interviewed - not because they are part of this "gang" but because they feared misrepresentation, and for good reason.

The most damaging aspect of this film is that people are believing it as it is a documentary. Not many understand the difference between docudrama and documentary. Not many understand the difference between "accurate", "quite accurate" and "realistic".

Yes, women have been beaten up, and women become suicidal and slash, but rarely. When the acting in a film is good, and the cinematography so accurate, it is easy to say that the film seemed "real". Seeing the way in which the truth was manipulated, and embellished is extremely frustrating, especially when I hear people who have never been in the prison or met anyone in there, say that they believe what that film has shown them. I have heard people say that they believe the film rather than what the inmate committee is trying to say. That they figure as Mr. Kastner does, that when the women inside say they are insulted, they are just "covering up". Put the opinion of a well-known male director over a woman with a criminal record, and yes, he'll have more credibility, generally. The sad part is that people tend to believe what they want to believe, and have some vested interest in believing that P4W is full of violent women to be feared by society, rather than believing that it is full of women that have been given a raw deal, who live in extremely close quarters sharing limited school and work possibilities, who do a whole lot of caring for each other and who have, by the events of their lives, a lot to teach all of us about patience and strength in facing a society in which it is difficult for women to survive.

Out of respect for the women who are not the semi-fictitious characters portrayed in Mr. Kastner's film, I am writing to ask that you remember how easily we are seduced to believe what we see, and to remain open instead to what women objecting from within the prison are saying, from what they know.

Tamarack,
C.A.E.F.S. Liaison Worker

Editor's Note: The funding which enabled Tamarack to work directly at P4W has expired. Hopefully, this situation is temporary and she will be able to return to her activities here at P4W.

Tightwire

The Tightwire serves many functions. Primarily, it offers a platform for artistic expression to the incarcerated women in Canada's only female federal penitentiary. It also informs the readers of current proposals in law reform. Included in the format are short stories, poems, artwork, notes, puzzles and jokes. We welcome any contributions in these areas. Especially those with a women's viewpoint.

Tightwire is published four times a year. In order to meet this objective, we are asking for financial backing through donations and subscriptions. Tightwire is self-supporting and we need your help in meeting our publishing requirements.

Thank You.

Jo Ann Mayhew
Editor.
Tightwire

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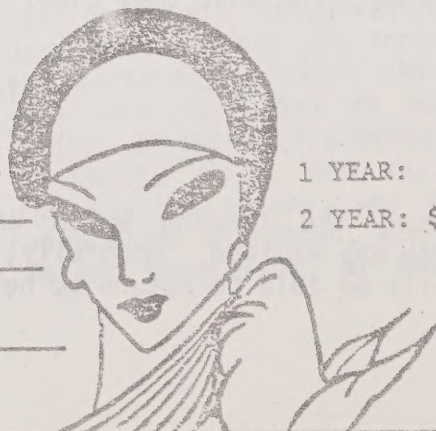
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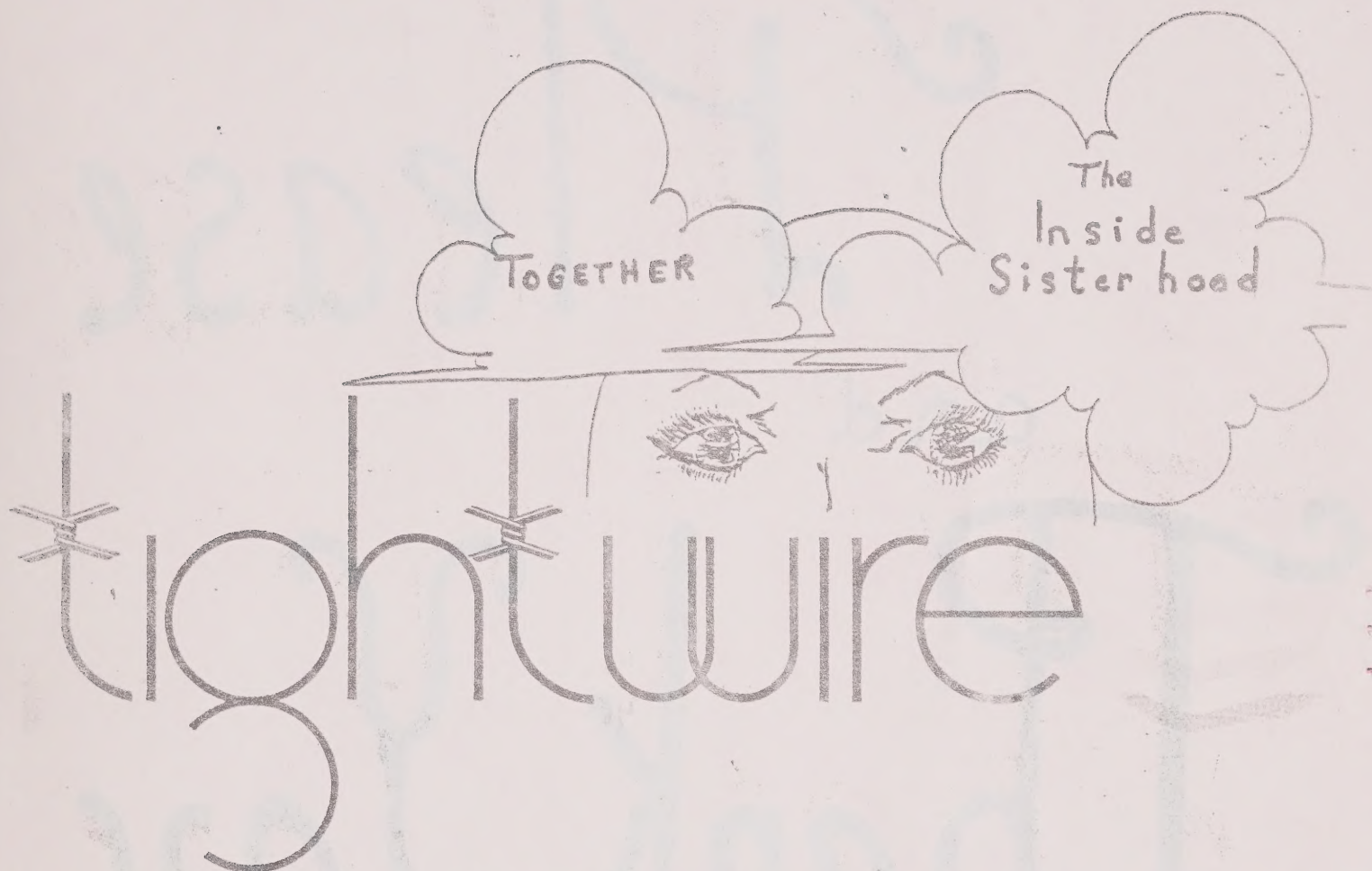
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